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Tajuk : Nurture young interest in STEM through closer ties, academics and industries told

## Nurture young interest in STEM through closer ties, academics and industries told

**KUCHING:** Instilling creativity and innovativeness in the younger generation can be achieved through forging closer ties between universities, industries and schools through science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)

Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) vice-chancellor Prof Dato Dr Mohamad Kadim Suaidi said this during the opening ceremony of the International Unimas STEM Engineering Conference (EnCon) 2016 here yesterday.

He pointed out that Unimas and Tegas have been joining forces to ensure the Ministry of Education's set target of 60:40 ratio of science versus arts stream students in Malaysian schools is well implemented in the state.

The conference was hosted by the university in strategic collaboration with Tabung Ekonomi Gagasan Anak Bumiputera Sarawak (Tegas) and the state Education Department.

Assistant Minister of Welfare and Community Wellbeing Dr Abdul Rahman Ismail officiated at the opening ceremony on behalf of Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Amar Abang Johari Tun Openg yesterday.

Mohamad Kadim described this year's conference theme of 'Innovative Solutions for Engineering Technology Challenges' as timely as the engineering community in general was facing various challenges in developing technology to respond to the needs of society and the environment.

"It is also pertinent to highlight here that the theme chosen for this year's STEM EnCon is aligned with the Ministry of Education's policies and aspirations towards achieving international standards and towards meeting national development needs in all schools," he said.

He also recognised the initiative of the organising committee to hold the International Science, Technology and Engineering Expo (i-STEEEx) which was divided into two categories.

The first category themed 'Sustainability through Recycling Innovation' aimed to stir up the minds of secondary school students from Form 1 to 6 towards how waste materials could be transformed and reprocessed to attain sustainability in the coming generations.

Meanwhile, the second category targeted at academicians, researchers and industries poses the



Mohamad Kadim (third left) alongside Len (centre) and Dr Abdul Rahman taking a closer look at one of the exhibits on display at i-STEEEx. — Photo by Jeffrey Mostapa

challenge of resilience in science and technology while integrating robustness, adaptability, durability, reliability and cost-effectiveness when designing new emerging technologies.

Later during the ceremony, Mohamad Kadim exchanged a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on behalf of Unimas's Faculty of Engineering with Dayang Salhah Food Industries and Arena Cipta (M) Sdn Bhd whereby the faculty's Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering Departments supported by the Electrical and Electronics Engineering Department shall provide the expertise in the design of a semi-automatic 'kek lapis' production machine.

Also present were Assistant Minister for Workforce Development and Training Datu Len Talif Salleh who is also Tegas chairman, Unimas chairman Datu Dr Hatta Solhi and Unimas student affairs and alumni deputy vice-chancellor Prof Mohd Fadzil Abdul Rahman.